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14 JUL 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director for Support

SUBJECT : Travel Benefits for Civil Service Retirement
System Participants

Bob:

I have just realized going through my papers that Colonel White has scheduled the travel proposal for discussion tomorrow at the Deputies meeting. We haven't had an opportunity to discuss this with you but I do want to get on record with you as being opposed to the proposal. In passing, I would note that this is against my own self-interest as I might well benefit from such an authorization when I retire. Briefly, and only in part, my arguments are as follows:

In Larry Houston's memorandum the penultimate sentence in paragraph 3, "This is emphasized by the Agency policy that all employees are equally subject to assignment anywhere as determined by the Agency," may be a statement of policy but is not a statement of fact and I could not accept it as justification for adoption of the benefits. Later on (paragraph 5) he quotes from the Executive Director-Comptroller's memorandum of 10 October 1967 "...for other government employees in similar circumstances" (emphasis added). I think you must agree that for many of our people the similar circumstances are those of somebody in the Department of Commerce rather than somebody in the Foreign Service. Lest I confuse the issue, please note that I distinguish between the death benefits and the retirement travel benefits. The argument inherent in paragraph 3 of Houston's memorandum I can accept. Most of our [REDACTED] field assignments are on a tour basis and, consequently, I have no difficulty in providing a death travel benefit for employees [REDACTED] assigned outside of Washington. I do have, however, serious reservations about the retirement travel benefits across the board for our Civil Service participants. I think it is very dangerous and would argue that if we can adopt this proposal by administrative action, we can in effect legislate practically any benefit for our people--the only limitation being whatever BOB is willing to let us program for.

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Robert S. Wattles
Director of Personnel

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